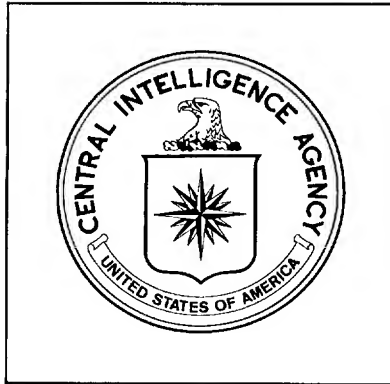


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MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA - SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Syria

Bombers Arrested

The Syrian government believes it has broken the back of the so-called "Arab Communist Organization," which has claimed responsibility for a rash of bombings in Damascus over the past 10 months. Targets of the bombings included the American pavilion at last summer's Damascus fair as well as the Egyptian liaison office and Jordanian embassy.

The interior minister announced last Sunday that "all members" of the organization present in Syria had been arrested.



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Pakistan-Afghanistan

Relations Relax Somewhat

25X6 [REDACTED] agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan to ease their propaganda war has held up fairly well since it went into effect a month ago. In addition, there has apparently been no trouble during this period between troops of the two countries stationed near their common border. A month ago, Afghan President Daoud had sent infantry reinforcements to the area as a show of force after receiving reports of clashes on Pakistan's side of the border between Pakistani military units and tribesmen.

Under the agreement to tone down their propaganda, each side promised to halt radio broadcasts containing personal attacks on the other country's head of government. Criticism of policies, however, was not prohibited. According to the US embassy in Kabul, both countries have been complying with the agreement but have "skirted close to the edge." The Afghans have been strongly emphasizing their position on their long-standing border dispute with Pakistan and have accused Prime Minister Bhutto of forcing tribesmen in Baluchistan Province to flee to Afghanistan. Pakistani propaganda, meanwhile, has been stressing the allegation that the far left has great influence in the Afghan government.
(CONFIDENTIAL)

25X1A [REDACTED]

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Afghanistan

Key Military Men

A pair of military officers appear to have emerged as important figures in the regime of President Mohammad Daoud. One of them, General Ghulam Haider, is the commander of army forces stationed in the Kabul area. The other, Colonel Mohammad Zia, commands Daoud's palace guard. Zia reportedly is a young leftist, while Haider's ideological leanings, if any, are unknown. Both men are said to have played important roles in the coup that brought Daoud to power in 1973.

25X1C [REDACTED] Haider and Zia are feuding with Afghanistan's top-ranking military man, chief of staff General Abdul Karim Mostaghni. A major factor in the dispute may be Mostaghni's reported unhappiness with the Soviet Union's strong influence over Afghanistan's armed forces.

We have seen no signs that these men or any other important officers have become disloyal to President Daoud, who continues completely to dominate Afghan political life. Whenever the 66-year-old President leaves the scene, however, officers such as Haider, Zia, and Mostaghni are likely to have a considerable influence on political developments. Haider in particular will probably play a key role. In addition to commanding key army units, Haider is a close crony of Daoud and a fellow member of the Mohammadzai clan, which has dominated Afghan government and politics for decades. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

25X1A [REDACTED]

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